

## **RQ-7B Shadow Unmanned Aircraft System (UAS)**

### **What is it?**

The Shadow is an Unmanned Aircraft System (UAS) Reconnaissance, Surveillance, Target Acquisition (RSTA) asset that operates at the brigade level. It provides day/night electro optical and infrared video to the commander in near real time. Other capabilities are a Communications Relay Package (CRP) as well as an Infra-Red (IR) pointer to execute accurate target hand offs to NVG-equipped Soldiers. There is an ongoing effort to field a laser designator to provide terminal guidance for precision guided weapons. The system is the result of a request from Soldiers for an organic UAS at the brigade level.

### **What has Army Aviation done?**

The Shadow was fielded as the RQ-7A in 2002. It successfully flew missions in Iraq and other theaters amassing well over 100,000 flight hours before mission demands required an upgrade to the B Model. The RQ-7B introduced extended wings which resulted in increased mission endurance. The Shadow A and Shadow B combined total system flight hours are currently around 465,000 flight hours. Both systems are rapidly closing on the-million mark.

### **What continued efforts does Army Aviation have Planned for the future?**

The RQ-7B Shadow Program of Record (PoR) continues to seek improved capabilities to meet emerging requirements driven by evolving tactical demands. Introduction of the Communications Relay Package and ongoing introduction of Laser Designation equipped payloads significantly increased the RQ-7B capability. The RQ-7C Product Improvement Program (PIP) Capabilities Production Document (CPD) is currently in staffing with Army Requirements and Capabilities Integration Center (ARCIC). The RQ-7C provides increased endurance, range, heavy fuel engine, increased payload capacity, and improved system reliability.

### **Why is this important to the Army and Army Aviation?**

The Shadow RQ-7B UAS is the Army's tactical "workhorse" UAS supporting Brigade Combat Team (BCT) operations. As a fully integrated, organic asset, the RQ-7B provides the ground commander with tactically significant situational awareness and the ability to influence operations in a timely manner.

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